Let us go home!" He moved to the door, followed by most of the peasants.

Now the classroom was more than half empty—only the workers and a dozen younger peasants remained. The workers seemed neither surprised nor dismayed. "Go on, comrades," one of them said to us. "One can speak better to a wall than to those blockheads. Now we can talk among ourselves."

There was a hard knock against the window shutter. It was followed by blows against other windows. A young worker looked through the shutter, trying to see through the darkness of the night. "They are throwing sticks," he reported. "Better bar the door."

The house was bombarded from all sides. Glass in one window was shattered. Cold air flowed into the room. The lad returned to his observation post at the window. "Not more than a score of them," he announced. "No firearms. They won't hold out against knives."

A war council was held. Factory strategists recommended a sortie. "To knives, comrades!" the lad shouted. He produced a long knife from the edge of his boot. Five other youngsters, with similar knives, joined him. Screaming and shouting, they jumped from the porch of the schoolhouse into the darkness and fanned out right and left. The besieging army, taken by surprise, fled. The workers returned, some jubilant, others a little disappointed that it had not come to blows.

It was impossible to resume the meeting, but we stayed for an hour or more talking about the conditions in the factory and the village. All the factory workers were city people, some from as far as St. Petersburg or Moscow. The local peasants were hostile to the factory. The origin of this hostility was not very clear to us but the cause might be in the monarchistic feelings in the village. There was no point in trying to reach the villagers through the factory workers. And there was also an abyss between the few young peasants who had remained in the classroom and the rest of the village. The workers and the young peasants thanked us warmly for the meeting, and we returned to the teacher's room to consider further plans.

THE AMBUSH

We were eight now: Zaloga and Alexander, Eugene and I, the two girl teachers, Lazar, and the other peasant driver from Chorino. I asked Lazar what he thought of the prospects of our campaign.